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An Outline of the Impacts the Anvil Mining Development had upon the Indian people of Ross River

I N D E X

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Introduction:

This paper provides a case study which may prove to be relevant to the analysis of the social, economic and political effects a pipeline would have upon small Indian communities. In all major fields of analysis considered by the Commission to date, there have been references to parallel situations. These have been cited to anticipate the results of proposed actions. I believe that an examination of the effects Anvil Mine has had upon the Indian residents of Ross River would indicate a number of similar consequences that could be expected with the construction of a pipeline.

Ross River was an isolated settlement prior to the development of Anvil Mine. A large labor force was imported for the construction and operation of the mine. A rush in mineral exploration accompanied the development. An extensive transportation and communications system was built by the Federal Government in support of the mine as part of their commitment to northern development. Both the mining company and the Federal Government expressed concern that native people should benefit from the development. With this in mind, the Federal Government and Anvil Mine signed an agreement stipulating the percentage of native peoples to be employed.

In these respects, the events which occurred at Ross River appear to parallel those anticipated or stipulated with the pipeline development:

1. a large imported labor force;
2. a boom in adjacent developments and exploration activities;

3. an expansion of the transportation and communication infrastructure to incorporate the present development and future potential growth; and
4. a commitment that native people will share in the benefits of the development.

This paper will consider the consequences of each of the actions outlined above as well as examine the overall effects Anvil Mine has had upon the Indian people of Ross River.

Historical Background:

Indian people of the Ross River and Upper Pelly Region shifted from a hunting and gathering economy to a fur trading economy about one hundred twenty years ago. This shift brought about substantial changes in the pattern of subsistence and social organization. Fur trapping demanded increased mobility. This generally led to the use of dogs which in turn demanded more intensive hunting and gathering practices. Areas would be exhausted between three to five years and the groups using the area would generally move to a more plentiful locale. Posts were visited intermittantly to trade furs for hardware and food goods. Food supplies were purchased to supplement traditional food sources, not to replace them.

Fur trading required considerably more hardware and more major moves. These conditions led to frequent caching or discarding of hardware because of the problems involved in their transportation. Hence people retained skills in tool making and appear to have placed a lesser value on accumulation of material objects than is the present case.

The Ross River Post was built in 1900 at the junction of the Ross and Pelly Rivers. This was the only post, of many in the region, to survive the decline of the fur trade during the late 1940's. Many people built cabins in the vicinity of the post. Lack of fire wood and a scarcity of game in the area meant that people could stay only as long as their food and fuel supplies permitted.

In 1943-1944 the Canol Road was built to service an oil pipeline, the Canol Oil Line which transported oil from Norman Wells, N.W.T., to Whitehorse. The road passed directly through the settlement of Ross River. The oil line operated for a brief period but the road was kept open intermittently until the early 1950's. During the late 1940's and early 1950's salvage operations hauled out much of the pipe and equipment abandoned after the closing of the oil line.

This period could be considered the starting point of the second series of major changes which the Indian people of Ross River have undergone. The shift was towards a greater dependency upon government programs and wage employment. These changes did not occur overnight. People were still involved in hunting and trapping activities; however the role of government aid and income from employment gradually became important to the economy of the Indian people. In order to receive benefits of employment and government programs, families had to settle in a community. Under these conditions a pattern of movement from community to bush and back again was established.

Between 1945 and the early 1950's most of the families in the region settled for longer periods in Ross River.

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Government assistance, wage employment with pipeline salvage and big game outfitters, and a declining fur market encouraged people to stay in town. With the closing of the Canol road, fewer jobs were available and it became more difficult to get governmental assistance. High prices in the Ross River Post and a continuing poor fur market combined with the above factors led to an exodus of many of the settlement's residents. These people moved to places along the highway such as Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Carmacks to receive the wage and governmental benefits.

Throughout 1945-1952 almost all the available jobs were seasonal. A summer job meant that a person could grubstake his winter. Most men were able to keep their hunting and trapping equipment intact for the coming season. Even with the low fur prices of the early '50's, hunting and trapping was considered to be an economic venture which paid its own way.

Discovery between 1960-1965 of lead, zinc and silver deposits in the Ross River area led to an exploration and staking rush. In 1962, the Canol Road was reopened to service the mining developments.

Many of the people who had moved out of Ross River in the 1950's emigrated back in the early 60's, encouraged by rumors of summer employment in mining exploration or with big game outfitters. At this time, many people began to stay about the settlement throughout the summer. Wages and government assistance were insufficient to purchase a year's supply of food from the store. Store goods were becoming a larger part of the

daily diet; hunting and trapping became more of a supplement to commercial foods but bush activities were regarded as the central life style.

By 1966 a rich ore body forty miles down river from Ross River was scheduled to become a mine. The ore body had been developed by a prospector who had been told of the showing by an Indian person in Ross River. The Federal Government, through the Roads to Resources Program, MOT Emergency Airstrip Program and an economic agreement with Anvil Mine, aided in developing the mine. A road was built from Watson Lake to the mine site, passing by Ross River enroute. An airstrip was built in Ross River and air traffic increased to meet mining exploration demands.

A boom in Ross River accompanied the increased mining activity. The post was changed into a department store; a garage was built; a bar and beer parlour were opened with a motel; a cafe, police station, health clinic, Territorial road maintenance garage, a water system, trailer court, a number of new houses, and a school were built in fairly quick order.

A number of white people moved into Ross River to take part in the construction of the mine. The mine was scheduled to be constructed by single labour and single men's accommodation only were provided at the mine site. Married men who wished to work on the construction yet still have their families nearby, moved into Ross River. A number of white entrepreneurs and governmental agencies also moved into town during this same period.

These events and those that followed between 1966 to 1975 generated many dramatic changes for the Indian people of

Ross River. The Indians did not share to any significant extent in the economic developments; however, they were to feel the consequences of the boom in the community and in the region. The balance of this paper will examine some specific aspects related to the overall mining project.

Labour Force:

Four different labour forces have been drawn into the region since the beginning of the mining boom. A crew of about 500 men were employed in the construction phase of Anvil Mine. Exploration activities employed between 100 to 200 men during summer seasons. The operation of Anvil Mine employed between 400 - 500 with an additional 80 - 100 employed in transporting the ore. The government service sector has employed about 50 people in the Ross River-Faro area and an additional 20 people outside the region.

This section of the paper will examine how each of these labour forces affected the Indian people of Ross River. It should not appear, in the following discussion, that each group only acted independently of the others. This was often, but not always, the case. I have chosen to describe the influence each group brought to bear upon Ross River for, in my view, this approach highlights specific aspects of the impact major developments have upon small Indian settlements.

Construction Phase:

The construction of Anvil Mine and the townsite, Faro, was undertaken by "Parsons", a general contractor, in 1965 with the major construction beginning in 1966. The general contractor

sublet many aspects of the project to other firms. Each firm contracting a specific function began with a core of men whom they had hired previously in the south. Further employment of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour was managed by either the general contractor in conjunction with the government employment service or by the specific sub-contractors.

Accommodation and board provided at the mine site was for single men only. The prefab bunkhouses located at the mine site housed about 400 men. A commissary provided meals. All of the basic necessities were provided; however there were limited diversions from the job after the shift was over. Card games appear to have been the main pastime of the men who lived in the camp. Movies were rented and shown two or three times weekly in a warehouse which had been converted into a theatre. There were no liquor outlets, bars or hotels at the camp during the first two years of the construction phase. Most of the contractors worked a six-day week with Sundays off.

Almost all of the construction workers came from outside of the Territory. Throughout the entire construction period approximately 15 Indian men from Ross River were employed in the project. The imported labour was generally a transient group, moving from one major project to the next; many came from the completed Hudson-Hope Dam project to work at Anvil. Men stayed at the site for periods ranging from an hour to a few years. Some men left their jobs and remained in the area on their own, but most were taken back to the southern centres where they had initially been hired. The crews were generally quiet and job oriented; however in a group of 500 isolated men, there were a

significant number of exceptions to this case.

Although the construction was to be undertaken by single males, some married men arranged accommodations for their families in Ross River. These employees would live in the bunkhouses during the week and commute by car or truck to Ross River on Saturday nights. They would spend the Saturday night and Sunday with their families and return to the mine site for their Monday morning shift. This involved as many as ten families and as few as three. When these men left the job they held at the construction site they either left Ross River with their families or they remained in Ross River seeking employment with the government service sector, the private businesses or mining exploration businesses.

This pattern meant that the women and children of the construction workers were virtually tied to the settlement. None of these families were related to the people of Ross River. Almost all came from southern cities and all brought with them a desire to create their kind of community rather than attempting to function within the established Indian community. There appears to have been two reasons behind this separate course of action. The families and construction workers were people who appear to have had little if any input into the character of the cities in which they previously lived. Moving into a small community in which the other white residents were also recent arrivals represented a real opportunity to influence the development of the settlement. The pattern of community they relied upon was that of the southern city. The attempt was to recreate, as closely as possible, that environment complete with all the urban ammenities.

Secondly, these families generally found Indian ways incomprehensible. There was an off-hand rejection of becoming a part of a bicultural community if that alternative was ever considered, and it is doubtful that the idea of fitting into the framework of the Indian community was ever entertained. Few had any previous contact with Indian people and most had stereotyped Indians in a manner that was, at best, uncomplimentary. G. Miller (1971) describes a number of incidents which support this contention. During the three years I resided in Ross River the stereotyping of Indian people appeared to be the rule rather than the exception. Few of the whites in the settlement took the opportunity to know Indian people on an individual basis.

Over the past seven years Indian people have been changing in response to the kinds of attitudes and behaviours described above. While it has not been the families of the construction workers alone that have brought about these responses, they were party to initiating the social and economic framework which influenced subsequent events in the settlement.

Almost every aspect of the Ross River Indian's life style has felt the impact of changing conditions. Some of these changes were regarded as beneficial, some as detrimental. Whatever the character of the changes accompanying the development, one thing was abundantly clear, the conditions which gave rise to change were not controlled nor appreciably influenced by the Indian people.

White people moving into Ross River brought with them urban attitudes and behaviours. The store, responding to their

requests began to handle a wider range of merchandise, such as stylish clothes, gadgets, hardware, fancy and quick preparation foods and other outside articles.

In concern for missing out on something in some undefined obscure way, many Indian people (primarily the younger generation) began to purchase the same kinds of articles. Functional value was frequently of secondary importance to style. The spending of funds on these items meant difficulties later.

The construction families, along with other white residents introduced many new patterns of social inter-action. The community club, established to administer community affairs and functions, was foreign to the Indian people. Demands were placed upon them to select leaders and to participate in community affairs. When Indian people failed to respond appropriately to the bewildering situation they were unintentionally made to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome at the meetings.

The children of the Anvil construction workers attended the school which opened in 1966. The student populations between 1966 and 1969 were composed of about 80 Indian children and four to 12 non-Indian children. The majority of the non-Indian parents desired that the school offer the same course of studies as could be found in the urban areas, so that their children would not lose out on schooling when they moved. There was resistance to school programming designed to overcome problems endemic to schools in predominantly Indian communities. This reaction to local and remedial programs in effect curtailed the school's effectiveness in teaching the Indian children. The point was clearly made to the Indian people that the minority transient

white people exercised considerable control over the education of Indian children.

While the children of all sectors of the settlement mixed easily, in most cases there was little contact between white and Indian adults in Ross River. The only situation which provided common grounds for contacts between individuals to be established aside from the store was the bar. It was in the bar that many different groups of people congregated. Indian people generally sat together with some movement from table to table among themselves. The white people generally broke into two groups. On Saturday nights the married construction workers would spend part of the evening with their wives and the single men who came down from the mine site. The other white people (government personnel, entrepreneurs and those involved in mining exploration) would generally group together.

Saturday evening would see quite a few of the single construction men from Anvil coming to Ross River for "a bit of action". The bar and the presence of women in Ross River attracted men to the settlement. They would arrive in Ross River early Saturday evening and go to the bar in hopes of "some action". This action included drinks, fights, sexual encounters with women and girls, or all of these if the night was particularly eventful, as many were. Liquor was always present. It facilitated open conflicts and hostilities and it was used as an inducement for sexual encounters. C. Miller refers to these fights in his report:

> "...The natives report that from time to time they are brutally beaten by whites in town. From my direct observations I have concluded that violence between whites and Indians, particularly when the latter have been drinking, is a rather common occurrence. However, in nearly all cases, it is the whites who are the aggressors, and it is the natives who are the losers."

My observations support those of Miller. However, the Indian people were losers, not only in the fights, but in the whole scheme of things. The climate of drunkenness, beatings, sexual exploitation and a frustration at being incapable of altering these conditions led Indian people into more frequent violent acts among themselves.

The presence of the RCMP lends weight to this statement. The first detachment opened in 1966 with the construction boom. This was changed from a one-man to a two-man detachment in 1969 as a result of a considerable increase in the amount of police work required both locally and at the mine site.

Throughout this period the Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation attempted to act to minimize some of the negative effects the construction phase had upon Ross River while also attempting to provide some employment opportunities to men from the community. The point made here is that the good intentions of the corporation and the government were of less consequence than the interactions between their employees and the Indians of Ross River and the attitudes of some of their men toward employing and working with Indians. There were no specific stipulations about employees or employment of local residents during the construction phase of the mine. If there were, it is doubtful they would have had any significant effect in avoiding some of the kinds of difficulties I have briefly discussed.

This section of the paper has touched upon some of the consequences of the influx of mine construction people. It should not give the impression that this labour force alone influenced the community. During the same time span and as a result of the mining developments many other groups were to make impacts upon the Ross River Indians.

Mineral Exploration:

The discovery and development of the rich Anvil ore body led to a staking rush in the region. Almost all of the forty miles between Ross River and Anvil as well as about forty miles down-stream were staked. The whole of the Tintina Fault became subject to extensive scrutiny.

Three to five different exploration companies operated out of Ross River during the summers of 1965 to 1969. These companies would conduct explorations programs requiring geologists, prospectors, pilots, chemists, lab technicians and university students to work throughout the summer. The prospectors and pilots were generally hired from within the Territory. The activity about Ross River enticed a small charter aircraft business to become established and two or three prospectors to settle permanently in the community. Indians were often hired as prospectors, assistant prospectors and linecutters. Exploration companies said that they preferred to hire local Indian men because they were bushwise; there was less likelihood of a split shin or a case of getting bushed or lost than there was with people from the outside.

The relationships between the exploration crews and the Indians were usually relaxed and cordial. Men were

recognized for their abilities and strengths in the bush, not primarily for their behaviour in the bar.

Generally the imported exploration labour spent only the summers in the area and would exhibit considerably greater tolerance to aberrant behaviour usually related to drinking. This tolerance decreased with the increased familiarity brought with seasonal returns to the community and with their increased identification and polarization with the white sector of the settlement.

Quite a few Indian men sought and accepted positions with exploration crews. Assistant prospecting was the preferred job. After a couple of seasons working for companies that paid a bonus for the discovery of a showing, Indian men began to feel that they, too, should be working for prospector's wages. They were consistently finding more showings than the prospectors they were assisting. The catch was to pass a prospecting test administered in Whitehorse. The fact that a test had to be written and that it had to be done in Whitehorse deterred men from becoming prospectors.

In 1969 the YTG Department of Vocational Education was approached about offering a prospectors' training program in Ross River. The course was set up in 1970 sponsored by the YTG and Canada Manpower. Approximately 25 men took the course and all that wrote the prospector's exam (about 22) passed with honours. It is ironic that the season these men should qualify as prospectors was a slow one for exploration. Very few could find positions and all were limited in the work they could do on their

own. All had signed agreements stating that they would not prospect for a three-year period in areas which they had prospected for their previous employers. Quite a few men expressed regret for having shown exploration firms mineral deposits they had noticed at earlier times. The training was worthwhile, however. Two or three Indian men have developed and sold properties they have found.

While the mining exploration crews were in the field, there was an expeditor located in Ross River to assure the needs of the camps were met. There were also two temporary mineral analysis firms operating in town during the summers of 1966 to 1969. These firms would employ one or two local people as lab assistants.

The impact all of the people involved in mineral exploration was minimal because of three factors:

(a) most families moved out of town as soon as school holidays began even if the men were employed elsewhere;

(b) the people involved in exploration activities were generally out of town and when they were around the town, it was almost deserted, and

(c) the employment offered to men drew upon skills they possessed rather than demanding retraining and relocation.

Local Entrepreneurs:

The boom in the mining business and the construction of a road network opened a number of opportunities for entrepreneurs in Ross River. The post expanded to supply the summer exploration

crews and meet the demands for a wider range of supplies requested by the new white residents. In 1967 the bar and motel were set up during the same period. Each of these businesses were owned or managed by white people who had moved into Ross River since 1966.

Entrepreneurs made substantial investments in the community. Consequently they regarded themselves as being less mobile. These people were generally strong willed individualists who undertook their tasks with considerable spirit and energy. Almost all were initially generous of their time and resources to help in community affairs. They thought of themselves as the permanent residents who established the community. It was their desire to improve the community and they were instrumental in having a number of services and amenities provided to the settlement.

These people demonstrated considerable strengths and flexibilities in the face of two considerations. Throughout the period between 1966 and 1969 there was substantial doubt on the part of Territorial and Federal Governmental agencies that the community of Ross River would continue to exist after the construction of Faro was completed. All governmental installations with the exception of the road maintenance garage were portable structures. They were prepared to move with the anticipated exodus. The businessmen who located in Ross River did so in the face of the anticipated collapse of the settlement.

The second condition facing the new business people was that almost all other white residents in the community were also newcomers. No defined social patterns had been established. The absence of a decipherable social structure was the source of considerable confusion and conflict among the white people in the settlement. This situation led to the rapid typing of people into broad categories so that an individual could determine with whom he could associate comfortably.

The political development of the settlement's residents paralleled the growth of the community as they kept abreast with changes. Most of the white residents had some previous experience in community government and political action. They were able to use this knowledge to form a Community Association in 1966 and work toward some common community goals. The Indian residents had no such prior knowledge or experience. The Department of Indian Affairs had established a Chief and Council in 1966 but these individuals did not have any clear idea of their functions or roles. (McDonnell). Community affairs passed the Indians by during the late 1960's. The white entrepreneurs interpreted the lack of Indian participation as indifference which failed to support and at times obstruct their efforts towards what they saw as the betterment of the settlement.

In 1969 the Yukon Native Brotherhood was created. One of its first acts was to establish management training programs for band members. Bands became aware of their political situations as well as how they could be changed. Many band members viewed their exclusion from community affairs with bitterness. Some

of the white people had been friends prior to the boom. With the boom, these people stopped associating with their Indian acquaintances of the past. Exclusion from community affairs and being spurned by old friends led Indian people to respond in kind as they began to develop political and managerial skills.

The white entrepreneurs inadvertently took steps which excluded the Indians from community affairs. These actions had the later effect of increasing the polarization between groups as the Indians gained in political awareness.

Most white entrepreneurs operated on the basis of the unquestioned assumption that the introduction of urban amenities and services were for the betterment of the community. This assumption was endorsed with such conviction that many Indian people also accepted the proposition unquestionably. These decisions carried with them many aspects of change which had not been given consideration. They were to bear the consequences of these decisions.

The services and amenities that were established in the community reflected white biases. The water line was located only in the white sector of the settlement. A stand pipe, linked with the water line provided the source of water for Indian and some white residents. The roads in the white part of the community were gravelled and well maintained in the winter while those in the Indian sector were neither gravelled nor maintained in winter. The proceeds from all movies shown in the community went into the community association coffers even though it was primarily Indian people who attended the shows. The B.C. curriculum was

taught in the school and deviations from this curriculum were discouraged by white residents. The road system was used predominately by white residents. In 1967 there were no Indian people in Ross River who owned vehicles although many hired the taxi to go to camps out of town. Public lands in the vicinity of the settlement were surveyed, zoned and subdivided. Title could be leased or purchased from Whitehorse through a process unfamiliar to most Indian people. Air service and all that it entailed was available to all in case of emergency. All government institutions were built within the white sector of the community prior to 1972.

The allocation of the land reserved for Indian use restricted the services which could be located in the Indian sector of the community. While there may have been sound political and economic reasons for locating some services where they did, the one-sided effect was clearly recognized by the Indians and construed to be inequitable. The white entrepreneurs appeared to have sought these services without considering the difficulties described above.

Government Labour Force:

The RCMP, school, Territorial engineering, Yukon Forest Services and Public Health constructed facilities and staffed them during 1966 and 1967. These services employed eight people initially, increasing to 13 permanent employees by 1969. Two-thirds of these people were married with families. They were more transient than most of those who had established businesses in the settlement. They usually stayed a year or two before moving, however. Some individuals remained

as long as seven or eight years. Accommodations were provided and subsidized for the government workers who lived in Ross River.

Because of their short periods of residency, few government service personnel created lasting individual impressions upon the settlement. However, the services provided have resulted in some irreversible changes which will be discussed later. The people who delivered the social services were in close contact with Indian residents on a daily basis. Some of these people attempted to adapt the service they rendered so that it more closely met Indian needs while others appear to have tried to adapt the needs of the Indians to the service. Some government employees fit in well, others not so well. Some responded with more sensitivity to one sector than another, others were more equitable.

There were few local employment opportunities with the government agencies. Those which were available were generally taken by local whites. One or two Indian men were employed with the Territorial Engineering Department for the summer months. The school employed an Indian to do custodial work. The major employer of Indian people was the Yukon Forest Service. Five to twenty Indian men would be employed for fire fighting during times when there were many forest fires. Northern Health Services employed an Indian person as a community health worker. By 1970 there were only two Ross River Indians permanently employed by government agencies located in Ross River.

Mine Labour Force:

The day Anvil Mine was brought into production went by unnoticed in Ross River. Some of the construction workers living in Ross River had moved, others had elected to remain in the community. Some with the mining company, some with private business or mineral exploration, some with government services and some with occasional odd jobs. Most of the people

who were to move to Faro had been moved by this time.

By 1969 a shopping centre, recreation centre, a bar and hotel opened in Faro. About 200 families were accommodated, and the balance of the mine labour force, about 200 single men, lived in bunkhouses located in Faro. The improved services in Faro meant less frequent visits to Ross River. This resulted in a decrease in the kinds of exploitation of the community discussed earlier. However, the different labour force in the mine exploited other resources which also resulted in difficulties to the Indians of Ross River.

The family people who moved into Faro were required to provide food for their families. Food was not provided as it had been for the single men. Many of these people hunted to supplement their food supply. Hunting almost always meant driving along a road in hopes of intercepting big game. A food source had previously been supplying Ross River exclusively and was now being utilized by Faro as well. This has meant a decline in the number of animals taken by people in Ross River. The Indian people of the settlement felt this loss more than the white residents because game meat represented a substantial part of their total diet. People in Ross River also indicated that increased hunting pressures from vehicles drove the game back some distance from the road. This meant not only less game but less likelihood of sighting game at old haunts. (The influences of the road network on hunting patterns will be discussed later.)

Since the settlement of families and the development of recreational activities in Faro, the interactions between the people of Ross River and Faro have changed considerably. There have been frequent hockey and baseball games between the two settlements. The teams from Ross River consist of a cross-section of people indicating a developing cohesiveness in certain areas of interaction. Faro is still an adversary but in quite a different context from eight years ago.

Adjacent Developments and Exploration:

The expansion of business and services in Ross River and the construction of the transportation system and mining exploration can be attributed to the development of Anvil Mine. Without the building of the Mine these developments would probably not have occurred, or, if they did, they would have been much delayed.

Developments in Ross River:

The post expanded, first to a store, then to a department store. Between 1967 and 1973 five different people purchased and managed the store. All but one of these people came into Ross River with families and all but two left the community after they finished with the business. People left the store for various reasons: poor management, inability to meet debts, personal difficulties, conflict with the community, an interest in different ventures, or a desire to move along. A change of store owners resulted in some confusion. Each new manager was checked out about credit extension, fur buying and grubstaking. The store job required a fair knowledge of each individual in order to be able to deal with these issues appropriately. A pattern was established with each new owner--initially there was a fairly relaxed and friendly credit policy, except for those carrying large debts. In the face of some Indians running up large debts which could not be paid and the opinions presented by other white people of the settlement about the fiscal irresponsibilities of the Indians, credit quickly became more restrictive.

The store changed in the ways Indian people spent their money. As discussed, increasing the variety of stock carried by the store acted as a subtle inducement to utilize the new things which were of little value to the pattern of living which had been followed. In some respects, the changes in the post reflect the changes in the settlement's

character. As a post it reflected the needs and demands of the Indian residents. It handled bush goods and staples. The post has changed to a department store which handles the amenities found "outside". The community has also shifted to an increased dependency upon and a reflection of the outside.

The bar-motel complex is the business which appears to have had the greatest impact upon Ross River. It provided a ready outlet for liquor. Whether this was a major cause of the many drinking problems may be debated, but that it facilitated drinking and the related difficulties cannot be questioned.

The bar was also the major social-recreational centre in the settlement. It became the focal point for many community activities and it also became the focal point for many of the drink-related problems.

The opening of the school in Ross River affected Indians in two different ways. It unintentionally placed an additional economic burden upon families with school aged children who had previously been in residential school. The families simply had to provide for more people. It tied families with school aged children to the settlement during the school term. This restricted fall-winter and spring hunting and trapping for these families and was an additional pressure which required Indians to purchase an increasing part of their food supply from the store. This in turn resulted in a loss of bush "goods" and made the return to bush activities very difficult.

Co-op Saw Mill:

The Band Council of Ross River establised a co-op saw mill in 1966. The co-op operated for three years, two of which were at a loss. Miller (1972) examined this situation and found that three factors led to the failure of the co-op. These were:

1. the managers' training program was not effectively reaching the Indian trainees. No one was sufficiently trained to take over;
2. Anvil did not purchase the anticipated amount of lumber, logs and beams;
3. the Band did not feel that they owned or controlled the co-op.

During its short period of operation, the saw mill employed between five and 14 men. The mill was situated thirty miles out of the settlement toward Anvil so that people had to relocate in order to work there. The one major Band venture of this period failed while other businesses were succeeding.

Mineral Exploration Activities:

This paper has already touched upon some of the influences the increase in mineral exploration activities had upon Indians in Ross River. In addition to the seasonal jobs available in exploration and the influx of outside workers there were other consequences of the activities in the region. There were a network of tote roads constructed to quite a few potential mine sites. These tote roads provided easier access to many parts of the country and opened up areas for hunting by vehicle. These areas have been overhunted and now game is scarce where it was once more abundant. The exploration camps generally purchased a large part of their food and camp supplies in Ross River. This represented a substantial portion of the store's income which sustained it through the quiet winter months as well as providing support for the wide range of merchandise carried. Had it not been for the purchases of the exploration companies, the store could not have carried the goods it did nor operate as it did. The presence of the exploration companies also had the consequence of generating and sustaining a great deal of interest in mineral exploration. The interest led many people into occasional prospecting in

hopes of hitting it rich. Hunting almost alwyas combined with prospecting and as a result, a few showings were discovered. This interest also led to the mining exploration training program which has been discussed earlier in the paper.

Transportation Infrastructure:

Road Network:

The reopening of the South Canol Road in 1962, the completion of the Robert Campbell Highway in 1968, and reopening the North Canol Road to the NWT border placed Ross River at the hub of a road network. The road network was another of the mixed blessings which accompanied Anvil's growth. Increased access meant cheaper freight rates on commodities, better health care in emergency cases, opportunities to visit other communites, much greater ease in reaching bush camps, an extended hunting range, more accessible winter wood supply, increased employment opportunities and more accessible government services and assistance. While these factors may generally have been considered benefits, there were also factors which were regarded as disbenefits to many Indian people in Ross River. With the roads came traffic deaths of local people, increased movement of people from outside into the settlement, overhunting adjacent to the roads and a consequent depletion of game, bush camps placed next to the road with a resulting increase in the moving back and forth between camps and town and a whole series of difficulties and tragedies related to drinking and driving. The roads in the immediate vicinity of Ross River have become virtually essential. The increase in vehicle ownership between 1967, when no Indian owned a vehicle, and 1974, when ten cars were owned, testifies to the increased use and dependency upon the roads. While local roads were valued, it was the connecting roads to Faro and the outside which were the source of grievance.

Air Strip:

The air strip was built in the mid-60's as part of the remote community emergency airstrip program. It is not a coincidence that the strip built in Ross River was able to handle the air traffic generated by the local mining developments. Other similar settlements did not receive comparable packages.

The airstrip and road network made Ross River the logical choice for a base for mineral explorations along the Tintina Fault. The strip was used by a weekly scheduled flight and intermittently for mining related business. The strip was also used in case of medical emergencies where evacuation to Whitehorse was required and by fire bombers in fire fighting operations.

The location of the airstrip has posed difficulties for Indians in Ross River. The road and river and airstrip have boxed in Indian lands, limiting possible expansion and development.

Communications:

Telephones were connected to "outside" lines in 1970. Prior to that, all communications outside of the settlement were conducted via radio telephones. The installation of outside lines coincided with YNB's band training programs. The phone was used frequently by the band as they began to draw upon the knowledge, experience and political authority of the YNB. Phones aided bands a great deal in their own growth.

Native Employment in Anvil:

The Federal Government and Anvil Mine in 1967 signed an agreement (The Anvil Agreement) which set terms for the construction and operation of the mine. In the second phase, there were a number of stipulations regarding hiring locals. I will quote two related sections for they bear directly upon this part of the paper.

Section Three, Subsection Two:

"(2) During the second stage Anvil will,

a. Subject to sub-section three employ competent local residents, particularly Indians and Eskimos, to the extent of at least 5% of the total number of employees within the first year, rising to 10% within the second year, and 25% in the fifth year, after the mine comes into production; and,

b. institute a training program for supervisors and foremen to insure compliance with the undertakings set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection."

While section three, subsection two may have been fulfilled to the extent of the two-year requirement, it appears as though the phrase "particularly Indians and Eskimos" has been overlooked until recently.

During 1970 and 1971 about five different Indian men from Ross River worked with Anvil. Three of these men worked for only a short period of time. They all indicated that they did not like the work at the mine. It was dusty and depressing on most jobs. All of the men were unskilled and were given tasks which did not require skills.

The main difficulties for the men working at the mine site came after work hours. They were separated from friends and relatives. They were placed in unfamiliar accommodations and confronted with unpleasant tasks. These could hardly be considered incentives to stay even in the face of good wages. Drinking after hours frequently added to these difficulties. Some Indians from Ross River set up tent frames and cabins near the mine, but the corporation attempted to discourage this type of settlement.

All of the men returned to Ross River after they finished with their jobs. They frequently spoke of the problems related to working in the mine. It is little wonder that

other men from Ross River did not seek jobs with the mine. Most Indian men were seeking short-term employment which would allow them to return to other pursuits such as hunting and trapping which were economically less profitable but more rewarding and satisfying.

From the standpoint of the Ross River Indian men, the Anvil Agreement was of little relevance. Their intentions to hire locals, particularly Indians, were of no consequence. Neither the permanent jobs nor the style of accommodations appealed to the Indian men. The terms of the Agreement were not reasonable in the light of this consideration.

(Two or three page overview on Anvil impacts to be inserted here.)

Conclusion:

This paper has only touched on isolated aspects of the changes which occurred in Ross River as the result of the construction and development of Anvil Mine. The paper, "Regional Impact of a Northern Gas Pipeline" (Economic Staff Group, 1973) anticipates the following conditions for a gas pipeline:

1. "...the construction of the pipeline could well serve not only to provide the territorial labour force with increased income, but also act as a foundation for accelerating the training and work experience of the Native labour force in ways which probably will be quite sympathetic with and can be utilized in the growing basic economy of that region after the pipeline construction period is over."

2. "The use of transient facilities on the perimeter of the main impact communities would reduce the potention for social problems....Potentially detrimental social impacts on small communities would be minimized through the location of construction camps well away from them and funnelling pipeline transients through the main impact communities."

3. "A number of developments in the business sector and an increase in petroleum and gas exploration are anticipated."

In addition to these predictions a fourth may be inferred from the Commission's terms of reference. Consideration of an oil line and a road, constructed at later dates, implies an extensively developed transportation network.

The description Ross River has focused on each of these predicted impacts, the consequences of some and the deviation from others is significant.

There was an attempt to isolate the workers from the settlement. These efforts failed in two respects. White entrepreneurs wanted the workers' business and encouraged them to visit Ross River, and, secondly, the workers' free time was their own and they found the means to get to and from Ross River. It is highly probable that similar situations

would occur with a pipeline regardless of the good intentions and efforts of the government and pipeline company.

There was an attempt to employ Indian men to work in the mine. This was not realized to any significant degree. The permanency of the pipeline jobs, the relocation of the worker, and the strange surroundings, and the general feeling of antagonism of northerners towards a pipeline all indicate that stipulations for employing Natives cannot or will not be met.

The business opportunities which expanded with the construction of the mine were not to benefit the Indians to any recognizable degree. Considering the scale of developments, it appears likely that only the large established businesses will benefit directly from the pipeline. This would appear to exclude Natives since there are no Indian establishments of this nature in the region.

The infrastructure which developed with the mine was a mixed blessing. Weighing the social and economic costs plus the construction costs against the social and economic benefits, it appears as though the developments have not been profitable. The same can be argued for the developments expected to expand with the pipeline. The communities the pipeline would pass by (considering either of the Mackenzie routings or the Alaska Highway route) already have a full complement of government services. Expanding the infrastructure would not significantly improve these conditions, but each development would be accompanied by an array of dislocations.

In the discussion of the socio-economic intangibles in the report, "Regional Impact of a Northern Gas Pipeline", one point is strongly emphasized.

> "These problems can only be solved (alienation and dislocation) in any significant way by a substantial degree of local control...A much greater degree of such control must be exercised with full participation of Native people in order to solve these larger problems."

The community testimonies heard by the Commission are such an expression of full participation. The question now is, will the participation of Native people be accepted. If so, then the universal rejection of a pipeline would prevail.

If not, and the pipeline is built, then the very construction of the pipeline will violate a major objective of the guidelines, which is:

> "...To provide for a higher standard of living, quality of life, and equality of opportunity for northern residents by methods which are compatible with their own preferences and aspirations."